

The honorable gentleman for having tried the experiment, how much of opposition, both in quantity and in quality, we could endure.—I feel much pleasure in looking to the spirit of the honorable proprietor, as it will tend to enlighten the public mind, by proving on which side candour and fairness are in reality to be found. I heard the professions made by the honorable gentleman of the utmost fairness and liberality, and I am disposed to give him full credit for the sincerity of his professions — but, at the same time, we all know, that when the mind is deeply imbued with a particular subject, it is somewhat difficult to maintain that standard of temper, by which, at the outset, we have determined to regulate our conduct. It is in the judgment of the country, on which side candour and fairness are to be found.

The hon. gentleman accused some members of having expressed strong feelings of indignation at the domineering language used by his Majesty's Ministers — But he cannot accuse any gentleman of having charged Ministers, as he charged the Directors, at the very moment, too, when they are throwing themselves on us for support in the arduous struggle which they have to sustain, with being influenced by a base and ignoble passion, for the patronage of the East-Indies. (*Hear ! hear !*)

He was also severe on another gentleman, for having imputed ignorance to the petitioners from the outports. I believe that ignorance *has* been shewn by them on a subject with which they necessarily could not be so well acquainted as the Company, but I have never heard any proprietor say, that the members for those outports, by a most scandalous dereliction of their duty, were sworn to vote for a particular measure, whether right or wrong. (*Hear ! hear !*)

The hon. gentleman went into a variety of voluminous details through which I will not follow him, not because I would check this species of discussion, but because there are many gentlemen in this assembly better qualified for examining his commercial statements than I am. I decline following him, however, not merely because I am incompetent to the task, but because I think I can shew, in a very few sentences, that the far greater number of the facts he has adduced, are either totally irrelevant, or totally inconclusive.—The hon. gentleman entered into a very long argument, to shew the advantage enjoyed by the Americans in their intercourse with India, and for half an hour he dilated upon this subject. Now, Sir, the advantage which they possess over us is admitted in the Resolution before the court ; but the honorable gentleman did not say one syllable on the only point

Which that resolution leaves open, whether the superiority of the Americans arises from their commercial energy, or their neutral immunity. (*Hear ! hear !*) As to the observations which he has made to prove that the loss of our commerce with the United States has been compensated by an increased trade to South America, it must be obvious to every mind, that though these arguments might be very appropriate, if we were discussing the merits of the Orders in Council, and the shutting-up of the trade with America, they are not quite so relevant when the question relates to the Company's Charter and the opening of the trade with India.

The hon. gentleman relying, as he expressed himself, entirely upon facts, has stated, that under the system of the Company a great increase had taken place in the trade to China, and this statement he has advanced with the view of shewing, if I understand him, that, under the system of the Company, the China trade cannot receive any increase whatever. He also enlarged considerably on the flourishing state of the indigo trade under the direction of the private merchants, aided by large loans from the Company; and the moral which he deduced was, that the indigo plantations never could have been brought to their present state of perfection by the Company, although his own statements most con-

vincingly shewed that they never could have been so improved *without* them. With a studious deprecation of individual examples, and a studious recommendation of average computations, the hon. gentleman favoured us with one or two isolated instances of adventure, on the part of private merchants, to and from India, and this, too, without stating the only point at all conclusive on the subject, namely, how these enterprizes succeeded. The hon. Chairman has informed us, that a part of the imports of the three last years are, at this hour, lying a dead weight in our warehouses. The hon. gentleman, though studiously throwing aside individual opinion, and declaring that he would found his statement on nothing but facts, laid, with respect to one part of his subject, the greatest stress on what he stated to be the opinion of Mr. Colebrook; which, after all, now turns out to be not the opinion of that gentleman, but of a person deeply interested in the private trade to India. With the same profession of studiously abstaining from opinion, with the same reverence for facts, he rested the whole weight of his argument respecting another essential point, I mean, the possibility of preventing illicit traffic, on the private opinion, delivered to himself in conversation, of an unnamed commissioner of the revenue. (*Hear! hear!*)

I could proceed with this sort of scattered remarks; I could make similar observations on many other parts of the hon. gentleman's speech, which I heard with the same degree of conviction as was produced by those to which I have alluded,—but I will decline the task, on this plain and simple ground, that, giving him all for which he asks, giving him all he contends for, the main question before us remains in all its untouched integrity. The question is not, whether the Americans trade more cheaply than the Company; still less, whether the Orders in Council proved injurious to the commerce of England; nor is it, whether we carry on the Indian trade at a loss (though I understand that not to be now the fact); but the question before us is: whether, admitting, for argument, that all these commercial evils, which the hon. gentleman has described, attach to the present system, are they not well worth incurring for the sake of avoiding those political mischiefs which form the single and the dreadful alternative? (*Hear ! Hear !*)

Now, Sir, if on this part of the subject, I wanted a *prima facie* argument of great weight, I would depend upon the account which the hon. gentleman himself gave of the political system of India. A description in colours so fervid that even I, an ardent admirer of that system, could

scarcely have dared to follow him. Had I left the room at the moment when the hon. gentleman concluded his panegyric, I should have been satisfied that he was warmly with the Court of Directors on this occasion. I should have thought that when a system had so completely answered all the ends for which it was intended, even the smallest apprehension, even the most distant surmise, of its danger, would have armed all hands in its defence; that all parties would be ready to guard such an institution, from moth and rust as well as from violence and plunder, from tarnish as well as from decay. (*Hear ! hear !*) I should have thought that a system of this nature would never be sacrificed, or in the slightest degree hazarded, for any commercial experiment whatever.

Protesting against the necessity of producing, more than *prima facie* arguments on this subject, where those arguments have not been answered, I would yet cheerfully join issue with our opponents on the matter of fact. Reviewing the correspondence with His Majesty's ministers, what is the state of the argument? The Directors say, it is impossible for the Company to conduct its important political functions without the profits of the China trade, by which they are at present supported. Ministers admit this fact.

The Directors then assert, that, if the proposed regulation should produce a defalcation in that fund, the measure must be wrong; and this too is admitted by ministers. The directors next proceed to shew, that it must have that effect. The government give a vague denial, and ask for more discussion. With this the directors comply, and support their case by the most cogent reasoning, requesting that, if their reasoning is still to be set aside, it may at least have a more explicit answer. The reply of Ministers is, that we are at full liberty to hunt for an explicit answer in the Journals of the House of Commons. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Sir, there is a two-fold view of this question, which is very important. First, from the facilities of smuggling tea under the new system, the profit being no less than 95 per cent. on the sale-prices, and from the great opportunities afforded by the vast range of islands, termed the Eastern Archipelago, where tea can easily be procured, the great argument is, that the monopoly of the China trade will be shaken to its foundation, and, when that goes, all our establishments will go with it. Now, in this doctrine, have the directors gone on any new ground? have they advanced any thing hitherto unknown to mercantile men? why, Sir, Dr. Adam Smith, the great oracle of the advocates for the extension of

trade, but who, like other oracles, is not always understood by his own priests, has explicitly admitted, how difficult it is where strong temptation exists, how impossible in some cases, for any government to check illicit traffic. But I have a greater authority even than that of this great man; for great I certainly admit him to be, though considerably mistaken in all this business. I have the experience of the last few years.—Look to what has occurred during that time; you talk of “the seizure and confiscation of ships;” have even burning and death, been sufficient to stop illicit traffic, when the interests of men were powerfully stimulated by the hope of great eventual gain?

What were ministers called on to give us? They were called on to give us explanations as to those regulations; first, by which they intended to check the illicit importation of tea into this country, and into the other parts of Europe; secondly, by which they purposed to prevent the illicit shipment of the article in the Eastern seas. Have they done either? No,—they have given you two or three embryo measures, vague in the extreme, which do not effect the only points to which they ought to have been directed.—Regulations are vaguely proposed to check illicit traffic when the private traders come into particular ports in this country;

but what is to prevent them from running to innumerable points along the shores of Ireland and Scotland? But, besides, it is a most important consideration, that if the illicit shipment of the commodity may easily take place abroad, it is useless to talk of preventing it in this country, for those engaged in it will then find ways and means to surmount every difficulty. Now what have ministers said on this particular point? I cannot find in the Earl of Buckinghamshire's letter any thing on the subject, except an allusion to "the extension of the manifest act." What then is a manifest? As far as I understand the matter, it is a document stating the cargo and lading of a ship; to which document, however, it is essential that it shall be authenticated by the Custom-House established, or the British consul resident, at the port or ports where the shipment is made——Now the Eastern Archipelago contains a vast extent of coast; for it contains, I had almost said, a countless number of islands, some of which are larger than Great Britain itself. How many Custom-Houses are there? what British Consuls are established in those ports? An extension of the manifest act! Do Ministers intend to fringe the whole coasts of those islands with commercial stations and revenue Officers? If such a proposition were

made to them, its extravagance would occasion them to smile; but I say that they are guilty of infinitely greater extravagance, when, without any guards, without any securities of this kind, they are about to hazard the ruin of all these great establishments; when they would abandon the keys of this great trade to private adventurers, vainly flattering themselves that some unknown, yet-to-be-devised remedy, some scheme dropped from the clouds, some lucky thought of a future hour, will enable them to steel those adventurers against the powerful and combined influence of strong temptation and lavish opportunity.

As a last consolation, Ministers assure us that, if any defalcations should take place in the revenue, they are deeply interested in meeting them, and will afford every assistance to restore our dilapidated affairs. I believe them. I must think of any set of persons, honored with the royal confidence, who would not, in such a case, do their utmost to assist us heart and hand. But my belief is, that it will then be too late; and it is no answer to me to say, that they are sure to have the will to aid us, when my argument is, they are sure not to have the power. This is the result of their proposition; that they give us evils in the gross, and promise us remedies in detail. They suggest a measure where all

that is certain is bad, and all that is good is contingent.—(*Hear ! Hear !*)

On this important part of the subject, I think the crude ideas I have thrown out, contain reasoning sufficient to influence my mind against agreeing with this proposition, until I hear on the side of Ministers, some clear and explicit regulations.—The great fear on the other point of this momentous question is, that the increase of the trade between the two countries, would also increase in a very great degree the number of private Europeans in India—an event ominous to the welfare and happiness of the natives, and eventually no less ominous to the peace and prosperity of the empire at large.

When this argument has been urged by the advocates of the Company, I cannot but express my surprise at the levity with which it has been treated.—It seems considered to be an argument devised in order to serve a turn, the mere child of the exigency of the moment.—But can our adversaries be so ignorant of history?—are they so ill informed in the events of passed times as not to know that the grand legislative problem which, for half a century, the Company have been endeavouring to solve, has been, to adjust the balance of intercourse between the natives and the Europeans resident in India? To this point

have all their painful watchings, all their care, and all their attention been directed; but at length, time, chance, opportunity, and industry, combined, have formed that establishment which the honourable gentleman has described as so profuse of advantages. A friendly, harmless, and peaceable connection has been settled between two nations, one of them the most adventurous, the other the most timid and pusillanimous on the face of the earth. It is what the philosophers and sages of old would have delighted to see—a perfect equilibrium between presuming strength and unresisting weakness.—(*Hear! Hear!*) Now, shall we be told that this system cannot be endangered by throwing an additional weight into one side of the scale? shall we be told that no danger can accrue from inundating the East with adventurers, who, from the manner in which they will go out, cannot by possibility be bound by the specific regulations now in force? Does not the burden of proof here lie on our opponents?

What are the arguments by which we are met on the other side? We are, in the first place, told, that we libel the character of the private British merchant, in supposing him capable of insolence and oppression. And with this topic of defence, is mixed one of recrimination;

for an injurious and contumelious deportment, it is said, is less to be expected from the private merchant, whose interest enjoins obsequiousness and civility towards his customers, than from the agents of a magnificent and Imperial Company.

To take first the argument of recrimination, I have only met with one attempt, to found it on a basis of fact. This is in a periodical publication, well known for its ability and abusiveness—the *Edinburgh Review*.—The document relied on is a paper written by Sir Philip Francis, then a member of the government of India, in 1783, describing certain disorders which had recently taken place; disorders, now eradicated, and for the very purpose of eradicating which, that gentleman wrote the paper in question. Why, Sir, this argument is born thirty years too late. We are told that a new system must be introduced in 1813, in consequence of a necessity subsisting in 1780. With just as much pertinence, might the author have asserted, that this country was now in the utmost commotion,—that this metropolis was in a state of riot and confusion, that its houses were in flames, and its streets in arms, and, as a proof of all this, have referred to the self-same period of 1780.—(*Hear! Hear!*)

But it is said, that we libel the character of the British merchant! Who, Sir, libelled that cha-

racter? or where is such a slanderer less likely to be found than in the heart of this great metropolis?—a metropolis, of which may be said, and in a higher sense, what was once said concerning Tyre of old, “Her merchants are princes, and her traffickers the honorable of the earth”—Honorable, with better titles than those of rank;—princes, because, ennobling princely wealth by princely liberality.—(*Hear ! Hear !*) I am convinced that the outports possess their full share of this valuable character; I am not, however, libelling that character, but the reverse, when I say, that the respected and respectable persons in question, are not a fair sample of the sort of traders who would go out to our possessions in the East, in the event of an open trade; still less, of those low agents and adventurers who might throng thither for purposes very different from those contemplated by the fair merchant. Am I not borne out in this statement by the history of India itself? Are there a more respectable class of men than the present body of private merchants residing under the Company's Government?—and yet is there any thing more true, than that in the time of Lord Clive, persons holding the same situation, being less checked than now, far removed from public opinion at home, and exposed to the strongest temptations that can act on

human passion or infirmity, were guilty of the grossest oppressions towards the natives? There is another fact still more strong, and which still farther illustrates my argument. Can any thing be more certain than that many persons connected with the slave trade, in this country, were most unimpeachably humane, upright, and honorable? and, on the other hand, can any thing be more certain, than that the lower order of traders embarked in that traffic, were guilty of excesses, at which not only their principals at home, but at which human nature itself would have shuddered? (*Hear! Hear!*) I do not mean to say that I understand the secrets of that trade so well as some of our friends, the outports; but I do say, the history of that trade is a signal warning to all generations, a signal warning to us, that we should not, with these facts before our eyes, out of respect to the valued character of a British merchant, compliment away the ease and happiness of so many millions of our defenceless fellow creatures in a distant country.

These are not the points, however, touched on by His Majesty's Ministers. I say, *touched on*; because all their attempts at answers are mere *tangents*; glimpses, not views, of arguments. (*Hear! Hear!*) We are told by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, that our objection,

arising from the danger to be apprehended by the influx of Europeans to India, comes too late; because the export trade which, as he seems to insinuate, we have conceded, will do all the mischief that we contemplate, and that we have therefore no right to make that apprehension a ground of objection to the allowance of a free import trade. Now, sir, it is rather more than I know that we *have* conceded the export trade. (*Hear!*)

If we have said little about it, the reason is, because it is of infinitely less importance than the other part of the question at issue. But mark their consistency. Ministers intimate, that we have conceded every thing by our supposed concession of the export trade; yet they acquiesce in the assertions of the outports, who contend, that the mere concession of the export trade will not send out a single additional ship or man. Thus our having conceded every thing is made an argument for our yielding to a fresh application, although it is on the very nullity of that concession, that the fresh application is founded. (*Hear! Hear!*)

The hon. proprietor used rather a different line of argument. He contended that the numbers who would go out to India must necessarily be bounded, because no man would proceed there, who was not actuated by the hope of

profit. Now, I confess, I must have been in one continued dream, through his whole speech, if the effect of nine in ten of his arguments, I believe I might say, the tenor of nine in ten of his propositions, was not to prove, that the hopes of profit in this trade, could not be calculated; that they were, indeed, unbounded. If, therefore, I am to accept it on his authority, that the hope of profit would be the measure of the number who would proceed to India; and if I am also to accept it on his authority, that the hope of profit is unbounded; then I have his own authority for stating, that the number of persons who would go out would also be unbounded. (*Hear! Hear!*)

The last reliance of the hon. gentleman was on the regulations of the local governments of India. On this subject I did intend to have made some observations. But the exhausting demand which I have made on the patience of the Court, renders it necessary that I should confine myself to one or two cardinal points. The hon. gentleman appears to have been guilty of a great mistake, in thinking, that because the balance of the Indian empire is perfect now, it would also be perfect after so essential an alteration had been made, as that which he recommends; though, according to his own idea, so considerable a change must be ef-

fects as would infallibly destroy the balance, by the accession of strength and numbers to one side. If, Sir, I even admitted the hon. gentleman's speculative argument, I would not allow his practical conclusion. I would not allow, because the government of India is a model of almost invulnerable excellence, that, therefore, we should put it to every stress and strain which it can possibly bear. From the merest tool of the lowest mechanic, to those great moral engines which are wielded by legislators and governments, it is the universal rule to spare that which is good as much as possible. I give the hon. gentleman credit for his wish to state every thing fairly, but, in point of fact, he has fallen into inaccuracies. When he called the attention of the Court to the police establishment of India, did he consider that the Indian empire is half as large as Europe? Did he recollect, that, within the range of the Company's dominions, there are two or three thousand miles of coast? And can he suppose that the *Chokees* placed in different and dispersed stations, throughout those immense territories, can effectually interfere to prevent the intercourse of individuals, when the motives that incite them shall be so excessively increased? I shall indeed deprecate the time, when our safety in that region, is owing to 150,000 troops, not above

20,000 of whom, according to the hon. gentleman's statement, are British subjects.

But instead of discussing at length this question, I will concede to the hon. gentleman all that he asks.—I will concede that what is now offered, and what may be done, will answer every purpose of averting the abuses to be apprehended from the free efflux of Europeans. I will concede that the private merchants, immoveably stationed at different points, will act with the utmost discretion and decorum. I will concede all this, and what follows? Why, you will be plunged in a new controversy, precisely like that, only somewhat worse, in which you are engaged at present. These adventurers will return to this country, and to Parliament, complaining, (probably with the greatest truth) that their speculations have failed. They will lay the blame of that failure on the still remaining restrictions, and will demand a further relaxation, on the abused ground of British liberty, and commercial right. You will again have the Ministers inviting you to frank and friendly discussion, only to close that discussion again, the moment that they find themselves out-argued — (*Applause*). Again, the adventurers will say to Ministers, "Give us this, for you have hitherto given us nothing;" and Ministers will turn round upon

us and say, "Give them this, for you have already given them all."

One remark of the honourable gentleman deserves particular notice—"Why," said he, "will you not permit these persons to try their hands at the open trade?" This argument I have been surprised to find advanced by persons possessed of great political knowledge; but they ought to consider what it is that they propose. Do they remember that it is a political experiment which they are about to make? Do they consider that they are about to act on a living subject? I should have thought that the disastrous history of Europe, for the last twenty years, had read us a sufficient lesson on the danger of such experiments. I should have thought that such doctrines had been swept away in the carnage which they themselves occasioned. There was a time, Sir, when revolutionary France was desirous of bestowing upon this country a better constitution than that under which we live; Why did you not permit her to try her hand for a short time?—(*Laughter, and Hear! hear!*) Why did you not let those monsters loose upon our shores for a few years, as a mere experiment, on condition that they should be muzzled again, if they devoured you too fast? (*Loud applause, and laughter.*) There is, at this moment, a being on the other side of the water,

who has presumed to intimate, that he could furnish you with a better system of government than that anomalous compound of *oligarchy* and *democracy*, which you are apt to fall down and worship. Why will you not consent to let him try the experiment for a few years? I pledge myself that you will find him perfectly willing to be taken on trial.—(*Applause.*) Or if you are determined to try the particular experiment under consideration, be content with that part of it which will affect the constitution of this country, and leave untouched the constitution of India. Confer on your ministers an amount of patronage equivalent to that of India. Try how your liberties will thrive under an arrangement, which shall consign to the Cabinet the command of nineteen out of twenty votes in Parliament. But do not involve the inhabitants of Hindostan in your speculation; do not make them partners in the hazard. Do not purchase your ruin with their's, when you may be ruined for nothing.—(*Laughter, and applause.*)

Sir, the honourable Gentleman has told us that he would recommend indemnity for all those persons in the employ of the Company, who might be affected by the change. I believe he would even have them pensioned for life. If this were the question before the Court, I should merely insinuate, that, while we have the assurance of the

hon. gentleman, that he would give this advice to Ministers, and I doubt it not, we have not even a hint from Ministers, that they will take the advice when given.—(*Applause.*) Nor should I greatly blame the unhappy persons, whose interests would be sacrificed, if, in the contemplation of a change so fearfully menacing their nearest interests, they were to ask for some more solid security than the good wishes, however fervent, of the hon. gentleman. My object, however, in adverting to this point, is somewhat different. It may perhaps be practicable to indemnify the individuals in the employ of the Company; but if the experiment before us should carry ruin to the heart of the Indo-British constitution, how, let me ask, will you indemnify the natives of Hindostan? With what provisions for *their* relief will you crowd your statute-book? What reparation will you find in your pension-list for the ruined hopes and lost tranquillity of fifty or sixty millions of men? From what exchequer, from what financial fund, from what commercial gains, will you extract a remedy for the broken heart of an empire? I would not wish to conjure up imaginary terrors, or to shake in the eyes of ministers fancied alarms;—but I am sure I speak a language consonant with all that has been taught us by the

greatest masters of political wisdom, the deepest proficient in the history of man; when I say, that if the constitution of India *should* suffer the ruin which we apprehend, it will be easier for the British legislature to cover the whole face of that immense territory with their statutes of bounty and of indemnity, than to sow there again the seeds of that peace, order, social comfort, and political security, which will have been totally crushed and destroyed. (*Hear! hear!*) On these grounds I give my most sincere approbation to the solid and convincing arguments made use of by the Court of Directors. And, notwithstanding the ingenuity of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume), I hope that the Court of Proprietors will feel, and I doubt not they will, with an unanimity worthy the care and attention which they have bestowed on subjects of this nature, at former periods, and to which these walls can testify, the necessity of supporting their Directors, and of negating the amendment before them."—[*This speech was received with the most animated applause.*]

Mr. Harris (of Reading) observed, that he felt it required no common share of hardihood for a stranger, like himself, to address this Court, and, more especially, after the very able and eloquent speech delivered by the hon. proprietor

(Mr. Grant) on the other side of the room. As he neither had nor could have any particular knowledge upon this subject, except what occurred from conversation and reading, he requested indulgence on the present occasion, as he had intended, though the hour was late at which the former debate had closed, to have offered a few observations on the speech of the hon. member on his right hand (Mr. Hume).

He should have said, that however ingenious his remarks, however elaborate his statements, they were not at all relevant to the question. He should have said, and he begged leave to say now, that these observations would have been much more applicable to a meeting of merchants at Liverpool or Bristol, than to one composed of proprietors of East-India stock—for if they were followed up, they would go to the entire abandonment of the trade of the Company. It *did* seem to him that the arguments went to give the whole trade to the private trader, because he (Mr. Hume) stated, that the trade to India at large had not been a gaining one to the Company.

In looking to the correspondence between the Court of Directors and the Board of Control, he was struck with the ability which was displayed by their own executive body, and he took a very different view of the letter from the

Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the 13th January, 1809, from that of the hon. gentleman; that letter was the key-stone on which the whole negotiation turned. It appeared to him that the rights of the Company were there so clearly stated and explained, as to do away every ground of opposition. He could not agree that the Directors were only successful on the military part of the argument; their statements on the subject of commerce were as well founded as those which related to the military establishment. In looking at the subsequent correspondence, his opinion was still more strengthened. His sentiments were those of an honest individual, uninfluenced by any sordid motive, his immediate interests being so small, that if he did not consider this a question which involved the best rights of the country, as well as of the proprietors; he should not have stepped across Leadenhall Street to have attended the meeting. (*Hear! hear!*) But he thought that the interests of the Company and of the State had gone on so well together, and were so strongly connected, that they could not be divided without endangering the safety of both. At least the idea of such a separation ought not at this day to be entertained.

The letter to which he had alluded appeared to have produced its proper effect on the mind of the

Board of Control; for, from the reasoning in that letter, and the subsequent correspondence, Government at that time seemed to have arrived at this conclusion, or nearly so—that it was prudent and proper to confine the import exclusively to the port of London, although they expressed their opinion that the export trade ought to be extended to the outports. He was not surprised that this conclusion was come to by the late president of the Board of Control, because the wisdom of the father upon these points might be supposed to have descended upon the son. And he could have wished that that right hon. gentleman had continued in the office of president till these important points were settled, for, since the period of his having quitted that situation, it seemed that Ministers had been so assailed by applications from the outports, that they had seen reason to form a different and new opinion.

The Company had therefore arrived at a most important juncture, and it was absolutely necessary that a decision should be made, without delay, instead of protracting the discussion, as advised by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume). There is no time to lose; the Charter is nearly expiring, or, as a great city orator said at a meeting for a different purpose yesterday, “the lease is almost out.” With respect to the right which the Company had of

trading to India, it appeared to him from long established enjoyment they had, if not an absolute, at least what amounted to a moral right, to that privilege. It had been the custom to separate the political part of this question from the commercial: it had been said by the hon. gentleman, that it was better so to do, and that the trade to India might be permitted without endangering their political safety. He was of a different opinion, and could support himself by quotations from the greatest statesmen.—The hon. gentleman had fortified his opinions by the sentiments held by different merchants on the subject; and by the opinions of a gentleman in the Direction (Mr. *Bebb*), who was said to have made similar statements before the House of Commons. But if such were the fact, the hon. Director must have since found reason to change his mind, for he observed in one of the letters to the Board of Control, it was stated, that the approbation of the conduct of the Committee of Correspondence, in the late negociation, was signed by *every individual Director*. (*Hear!*) Individual opinion was sometimes of great consequence, and he happened lately to converse with a foreigner of some distinction, an officer of rank at present on his parole; as he knew him to have been in India, it was natural for him to inquire his sentiments

on the question, and the following were his words:—"Sir, I have lived and served in India twenty years, I have seen the principal seats of the Company's commerce, and my opinion is this—that if your trade is opened to the outports, as is now sought, the India Company will be ruined."

After such an eloquent and able speech as that delivered by the hon. gentleman on the other side of the room: it would be taking up time unnecessarily, were he to go generally into the question, he should therefore add a very few observations. It was asked by the hon. Proprietor (Mr. *Hume*) what had become of a considerable part of the profits of the China trade for a number of years past? He should be told that these profits, and much more than these, had been expended in East-India Conquests, not for the benefit of the Company, but for that of the Nation; not for the interests of the Proprietors, but for the aggrandizement of the Country. (*Hear !*) They were expended to dislodge from the Continent of India, and the Islands of the Eastern Seas, that man, who had been endeavouring to overturn all the existing establishments of Europe and of the world. Their valuable rights, therefore, although they were now proudly demanded by the merchants of the outports, should not be given up. They demanded, not a liberty to trade

to India, but to proceed to every part of our possessions, and to return to their various ports. They asked for this, not as a boon, which had been made the foundation of some of the petitions to the House of Commons, but they demanded it as a right, inseparable from the character of British merchants, who ought to be permitted freely to trade to every quarter of the globe. He feared he was trespassing on their time and patience, but it arose from his local situation, in consequence of which he had rarely attended the debates in that room. Another part of the surplus arising from the trade to China had been laid out in procuring some important articles of commerce, with which, but for the intervention of the Company, England could not be supplied. He had documents on this subject, but would not trouble the Court with reading them; and he concluded by recommending a continuance of the system of wisdom and firmness by which the discussions with the Board of Control had been hitherto carried on. The support he could give the Company was very feeble, but even the support of an individual was sometimes important.

Mr. *Impey* stated, that, as a friend to the East-India Company and to the system of Mr. Pitt, which had been carried on with so much happiness and success for the last thirty years, he was

glad that the statement of the hon. Proprietor (Mr. *Hume*), however prolix, had been heard by the Court with so much patience and attention. Without any knowledge of the private history or connections of that gentleman, he was sure he could not be very far wrong in considering his speech as the speech of the Earl of Buckinghamshire.

Mr. *Hume* spoke to order—He never saw the Earl of Buckinghamshire in his life—he never heard from him. Therefore it was wrong to throw out such an insinuation.

Mr. *Impey* resumed, by begging the hon. proprietor's pardon; he meant not to give him offence. However, whether the speech delivered by him was that of Lord Buckinghamshire or not, was very immaterial,—certainly he stood up in the court as the advocate of that noble Lord—and his speeches were of such a stamp as evidently bore his image and superscription.—(*Hear! hear!*)

Mr. *Impey* continued by stating that the hon. gentleman mistook him, if he imagined that he intended to throw any slur upon him; far from it. The Earl of Buckinghamshire and the East-India Company were at the bar of the public,—that bar was at present the court of proprietors, and it was right that the arguments of each party should be patiently heard.—A .

great deal of praise was due to the hon. gentleman, for the mass of facts he had detailed, and the ingenuity with which he strove to apply them to the question ;—he hoped that speech would be published and distributed among all those likely to take a part in the decision of this question ; he was sure it would do more service to the interests of the India Company, than the best efforts of its most strenuous advocates. For if that gentleman, with all his industry and talents, could find no better arguments for opening the trade to the outports, a demand with which, if the Company did not comply, the Government of India was threatened to be taken from their hands—if *he* could furnish no better arguments than those which he had advanced, then the cause of the Government was weak indeed ; —he thought the Directors might go to Parliament firmly depending on the justice of their claims, the effect of that speech, and the reasoning which they adduced in their correspondence.—Of *that speech* which lasted upwards of three hours, not one thirtieth part indeed had applied to the subject, and while they might admit and rely on those statements in it, which had tended to prove the wisdom and ability of the Company's Government—he besought them not to be led away by the wanderings of that hon. gentle-

man from the real question before them. The question was not whether the trade should be open to the private merchants, (though that was a most important subject) to which the greater part of the facts adduced by the hon. gentleman applied,—that question having been given up in his opinion, by the Court of Directors last year. Neither was it whether the merchants and manufacturers should be allowed to carry their manufactures from the outports to India; for that also had been arranged; but the question was, first, whether the whole import trade from India, which for two hundred years had come exclusively to the port of London, should be permitted to every other part of the country:—and secondly, whether if they did not comply with this demand, the Government of India should be taken out of their hands; for that was the alternative held out by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, unless they agreed to the proposed measure.

The hon. gentleman who moved the amendment, had complained that the Court of Directors had advanced nothing but opinions, and in answer to them, he had brought forward an immense body of facts, to which he had but one objection—that they were not relevant to the question. But the honorable gentleman need look no further than the motto of *Tristram Shandy*, to find that it is not

facts but opinions which produce all the troubles of mankind. The Court of Directors did not argue with Government as to facts, but about opinions. —They say, if certain measures are pursued, we think they will produce ruin to the Company, and Government are of opinion they can provide some legislative acts (they do not tell us what) to prevent it. There is a difference on fundamental principles, and if all the commercial facts from the beginning of the world to this time were collected together, they cannot bear upon the question.

If the Court were called on, at this time, to decide on any less important subject, he perhaps should not have thought it necessary to request their attention. But from the papers before them, it appeared that their very existence was at stake —the citadel of their strength was besieged, and the garrison was called upon to surrender at discretion. (*Hear ! hear !*) The letter of the Directors was not, as the hon. gentleman called it, a defiance to Government, but a manly and fair statement of the Company's sentiments. The question was, whether they shall desert their Directors at this moment, or unite with one heart and one mind to support them through the struggle in which they are engaged? We are told, that all which is dear to us is at stake; the question is then, shall we give up all that is valuable to us, or make exer-

tions proportionate to the dangers with which we are threatened?

If it were at all necessary to rouse the feelings of the court of proprietors, the eloquence of the hon. gentleman (Mr. R. Grant,) who preceded him, would be perfectly sufficient. But he did not think it was necessary; every one must feel the crisis and be sensible that we were called upon to act in self-defence. All, he was sure, with one exception, were willing to coincide in the propriety of the Resolution: but it was important that they should be assisted to support it by the good wishes of an enlightened public, and that by the candid and explicit statement of their case, they should so influence the members of both Houses of Parliament, as to obtain a verdict in their favour. (*Hear! hear!*)

It was not every enemy of the East-India Company, who was so liberal as the hon. gentleman who has moved this amendment; it was not every enemy who would indulge in such panegyrics on that which he opposes.—Was it possible for any man to stand up in this Court and pronounce such an eulogium on the Indian Government, without perceiving how weak and how wicked any Minister must be, who would endeavour to overthrow such an admirable system for mere speculative commercial advantages! There was an ancient apologue—the contention between the different members of

the body and the belly, which he thought suitable to the present subject. The enemies of the Company had stated that they remained in a state of apathy in Leadenhall-street, receiving the wealth which the East pours in upon them, and making no exertions for the general benefit; this accusation was most unfounded. For if the matter be investigated, the East-India Company would be found disseminating her wealth abroad—encouraging the industry of the East, and extending thither the blessings of a beneficent Government. (*Hear! hear!*) Nor are the manufacturers at home less obliged to them, for if there is any manufacture which is suited to the East-Indies, they are in the habit of exporting it even at a loss. And, if, on the other hand, any articles of the East are considered fit for their use, they are carefully selected and imported for their benefit. The wealth of that great Company had been directed through various channels to the public good, and if the country had been able to make a stand against its united enemies, it was in a great degree owing to the support and assistance derived from that immense establishment. (*Hear! hear!*)

The question was two-fold, commercial and political; the commerce of the East, was certainly of great importance to this country, for it contributed between four and five millions annually

to the Exchequer. But if compared with the political part of the subject, it became a mere trifle. Politically considered, the question not only affected the happiness of our subjects in India, and the stability of our empire there; but the stability of the British Constitution, under which we have so long lived prosperous and happy.—In stating this question, the first proposition he should lay down, was almost considered as a political axiom, and supported by the greatest statesman of our time,—that it was impossible to transfer the government of India into the hands of His Majesty's Ministers, without a dangerous increase of the power of the Crown, and hazard to the balance of our own Constitution. This proposition was laid down by Mr. Pitt, in 1784, and on that doctrine he founded the system which has since been acted on for the benefit of both countries. So convinced was he of its advantages, that in 1793, after an experience of nine years, he renewed the Company's Charter for twenty years, on the same foundation. From this principle, he and those who acted with him, never swerved, and the late Lord Melville, at an advanced period of his political life, in a letter to the Directors, has recorded his opinion. That opinion has been read before, but it is so very important that I beg leave to read it again.

“In the first place,” says his Lordship, “I set out with disclaiming being a party to those opinions, which rest upon any general attack of the monopoly of the East-India Company, either as to the government or commerce of India. My sentiments, in that respect, remain exactly the same as they were when I moved the renewal of the Charter, in 1793 ; and, if any thing, I am still more confirmed in the principles I brought forward at that time. That a direct interference by government in the affairs of India is necessary for their stability and uniformity, I am more and more convinced ; but that the ostensible form of government, with all its consequent extent and detail of patronage, must remain as it now is, I am persuaded will never be called in question by any, but those who may be disposed to sacrifice the freedom and security of our Constitution, to their own personal aggrandizement and ill-directed ambition ; I remain equally satisfied, as to the propriety of continuing a monopoly of the trade in the hands of the East-India Company.”

Mr. Impey said, that on this part of the subject, the next proposition he should lay down, was, that it was impossible to take the government of India out of the Company's hands, without creating dissatisfaction among our European servants, and perhaps destroying the allegi-

ance of the natives altogether ; we must not forget, that the only legal title we had in India, was a grant from the Mogul, and though the power of the Mogul has long gone by, the natives still look to the name with reverence. On this ground the empire of India was formed ; on this ground the Company made wars and concluded treaties of peace. Now if the natives were informed that the Company were no longer their governors,—who is it can say what effect might be produced ? They did not understand, how should they ? the complicated nature of the government under which they live—and a transfer to new masters, might put an end to their allegiance.—A long series of benefits conferred, has the necessary effect of engaging the human heart,—acts of kindness must insensibly win upon the mind and powerfully stimulate it to a grateful return. And he knew from the best authority, that the servants of the Company, as well as the natives, cherished the name of the East-India Company as we did that of our Constitution, because it was the source of their protection and prosperity,—and who can tell the consequences which might result from overturning it ?

But though these were strong grounds for preserving the government of the Company, he should go even further ; he would main-

tain, that if they had not a strict legal right to the territory and government, they had the strongest equitable claim that ever was established. India was conquered at their expense and risk, with the sanction of the authorities at home, and the natives had lived quietly under their government, which was admirably adapted to produce happiness, security and content. When he spoke of the conquest of India, he did not speak of facts which were long passed. Since the last renewal of the charter, the Company had expelled their ancient rivals and enemies, the French and Dutch. They have subdued their no less powerful opponents the Mahrattas and Mahomedans, and they had added to the British dominions the Cape of Good Hope, and the islands of Ceylon, Java, and Mauritius. All this had been done within the last twenty years. With respect to the second point, the good government of the Company in their territories, it was not denied; the hon. Proprietor himself (Mr. Hume) did not deny it; the most inveterate enemies of the Company had ceased to consider them as spoilers and oppressors. In 1793, Lord Melville declared, that under their sway, the Indian empire had attained a degree of happiness and prosperity which was never before known, and that if the British Provinces in the East, were compared with the neighbouring states

of the native princes, they appeared as a garden placed near the field of the sluggard. On these grounds they had established their right, and it was on a consideration of the just claims of the Company, that Mr. Pitt and his coadjutors had come to the conclusion which Lord Melville stated in Parliament, that through the Company the administration of the East ought to be carried on. Such was the unanimous declaration of Mr. Pitt's administration—Mr. Pitt and the men who acted with him, were great men, and their opinions had then, and still have, great weight with the public. To compare them with their puny successors, would be, indeed, comparing the greatest things with the smallest. It would be to compare *Ossa* with a *wart*.

Having stated their opinions, he should now advert to the opinions of his Majesty's present Ministers. The Earl of Buckinghamshire, in his Letter to the Court of Directors, says, "The expediency of adhering to that system, by which the Government of India has been administered through the intervention of the Company, is strongly felt by his Majesty's Government; but it must not be supposed that there are no limits to that expediency, or that there are no advantages which might result from a different course." Now he should be extremely

sorry to say any thing personally offensive of any Gentleman; but speaking of this production, as coming from a Minister, he must say that it appeared to him to be confused, contradictory, and unintelligible. It set out, in the first place, with a recognition of the principles of Mr. Pitt. "The *expediency* of adhering to that system, by which the Government of India has been administered through the intervention of the Company, is strongly felt by his Majesty's Government." So it was felt by Mr. Pitt. Now what succeeds? "But it must not be supposed that there are no limits to that expediency." This certainly appeared to him totally unintelligible; for, if it be true, that it is *expedient* the Company should still possess the Government, then the argument was in their favour; for it was to be presumed, that it would not be expedient to continue a Government, unless it produced the greatest practicable portion of happiness. I know not what his Lordship means, then, when he speaks of limits to this expediency, unless he means that the present Government is not an absolute model of perfection; and that a system could be set up, which might have some advantages which the present does not possess. And, from the last part of the paragraph, this seems to be his meaning—"or that there are no advantages which might result from a different course." But this appeared absurd in reasoning. For if it

were true, that the greatest quantity of happiness was produced by the Government as it now was established, then any other system could give only a *minus* quantity. It was setting up minor advantages, for the purpose of destroying others of the utmost magnitude.

But he should not rest on the absurdity of this paper. If it were true, that Ministers had devised any plan for the Government of India, capable of creating a greater quantity of happiness than the present system, let them produce it. Though we are Proprietors of East India stock, we are also Englishmen. What are our dividends, when weighed against the happiness of millions? If, then, such a plan be in existence, let them submit it to us, and we shall adopt it. But if, on the other hand, the present system has established the happiness of the natives of India, the security of our empire there, and the balance of the Constitution at home, let us not be sacrificed to the petty profits and doubtful speculations of private adventurers. Let not the East India Company be torn to pieces, and its limbs be sent to the outports as a *bonus* for the loss of American commerce, or the destruction of the Slave Trade.—
(*Hear ! hear !*) Let them look in other channels for remuneration, not to the destruction of the East-India Company.

But what were the reasons, what were the facts, which had been stated in support of this demand? Had Ministers been convinced that a larger import or export would take place? On what foundation did they rest their defence? The East India Company were totally ignorant on all these points. When these necessary questions are asked by the Directors, Ministers tell them that they are not bound to give any reason for their opinion, and that the Company must be satisfied with their decision. But if they were to be destroyed, it was but justice to demand, like the hero of old, to be destroyed in the light. Let us know who our enemies are. Let us behold the weapons by which we are destined to fall.—(*Hear! hear!*)

This he would assert, that if the Company were to remain in the exercise of the Government of India, the means to carry it on ought also to be vested in them. When Mr. Pitt first introduced the present system of Indian Government, he saw that he must put into their hands the instruments of Government, the sword and the purse; he gave them the military force, and the revenues. He also saw that they could not send that revenue to England except through the medium of commerce, and he therefore gave them what has been called the *regulated monopoly* of the Indian and China trade. In that

letter from which he had just read an extract, the opinion of Mr. Pitt, as well as of Lord Melville, on this subject, was very clearly stated; and, it was almost unnecessary to add, was in direct opposition to the alteration now proposed. The present Ministers had professed to adhere to the principles of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas; but in the course of this negociation they had, step by step, departed from it, until they had at length come to a proposition diametrically opposite. First of all, the Company were called upon to surrender the trade to India by throwing it open. On this point the Directors entered into long arguments, but as in the course of the negotiation the demand was given up, he should say nothing more about it. The next demand was, that the exports should go from the outports as well as from London. The Directors also state the danger of this, but being desirous to come to any terms not absolutely ruinous to the Company, they conceded this; and finally comes the proposition to extend the *import* trade to all the *outports*. On this subject the Directors have deliberated. They had stated to government that it was impossible to carry the measure into effect without ruin to the East-India Company.—The answer of His Majesty's Minister was, that "it remains to be seen whether some other mode cannot be devised for the government of India." Would the hon.

proprietor justify this? would the hon. proprietor tell us, that the Court of Directors were incompetent to decide accurately on the subject. They were men of great sagacity and information—men who had spent all their lives in the service of the Company, and what was more, a great part of it, in the administration of its government. Could he say that such gentlemen as these were not fit to form a correct opinion, or could he point out any persons whose knowledge of the subject was more extensive? The hon. gentleman tells us that the China trade enables us to pay our dividends, but the Directors have clearly shewn that if the India trade goes to the outports, to the extent demanded, it will be impossible to prevent the increase of the illicit trade, by which our commerce with China will be so deeply affected, as to cut off the resources for the payment of our dividends, and consequently to overturn the Company. On the subject of the illicit trade, what has the hon. gent. said? His opinion, it seemed, was founded on the statement of a Commissioner of Customs; and that opinion was drawn from what appears to him a very strange principle. The Commissioner said, “more smuggling occurred in the River Thames than at any other port.” And why? Did not the India and China trade come into the Thames? but when they were taken away, the

smuggling must go with them. Now if the revenue boards could not prevent this illicit traffic with the trade under their very eyes, how could it be obviated when the trade should have been extended to all the ports of the kingdom, and all the islands of the Indian Archipelago?—(*Hear! Hear!*)

In such a posture of affairs, we must range ourselves under the banners of the Directors. There was an obstacle in our way on which we must fall down, if we did not overleap it.—Let us then look the danger boldly and manfully in the face, and we should overcome it. The Company must know the danger which threatens it: their opponent is mighty,—that opponent was the Government; strong, as it was necessary it should be, to perform its functions, in power and influence. But when he considered that this was not only the cause of the Company but of the whole Empire,—when he saw the great merchants of London pressing forward with petitions in their favour, immense as were their difficulties, he did not despair.—In 1784, the rights of the Company were attacked by a Minister, great in power, great in eloquence; backed by a majority of two to one in the House of Commons; and supported by the first families in the Kingdom,—but they were united and ardent in their

defence, and he was defeated.—The East-India Company proudly stood their ground—but the Minister fell—a memorable example of the fate which ought to attend that *premier*, who would invade the rights of others for his own private and ambitious purposes.—(*Hear ! Hear !*)

On this great occasion, they ought to follow the principle pursued by their predecessors ; they ought to go before Parliament ; they should remind them, to use the striking and appropriate metaphor of Lord Melville, that the East-India Company was the great wheel which moved the commerce of this country, and they ought to call on the Government not to divert the stream which turns that wheel.—

(*Hear !*) We should point out the immensity of our transactions—all beneficial to the country. We should say, last year our exports amounted to near £2,000,000—our imports extended to three millions and a half—we paid into the Exchequer between four and five millions. Our navy comprises 100,000 tons of shipping,—we employ 14,000 seamen,—and in this great city 30,000 souls are dependant on us for their daily labour and subsistence.

—(*Hear ! Hear !*) When the Ministers see the East-India Company in all its magnitude and extent, they must hesitate before they determine on hazarding an experiment, from which evils the most alarming, in every possible point of view, must cer-

tainly flow ;—they must pause, before they give their sanction to a measure, which only promised a contingent good, but would probably terminate in the destruction of the Company.

Entertaining the views he did on this subject, political and commercial, he was called upon to express his most decided dissent from the amendment which had been proposed. As to the resolutions, he thought they ran too much into detail.—It would be for the advantage of the East-India Company if the principles contained in them could be stated in a few distinct propositions, fit for general distribution amongst the public, by which they could, at a glance, form their opinion. The great object was, however, *unanimity* ;—no division should appear amongst us ;—we should be firm, moderate, and, above all things, united in our defence.—Therefore, if any great number of Proprietors conceive that these resolutions ought to be adopted by the Court, he, for one, should not oppose them.

Mr. Horace Twiss hoped, that though in common with a gentleman (*Mr. Harris*) who had recently addressed them, he had not the honor to be generally known in that Court, yet the propositions contained in the amendment before them would, in some degree, justify him in obtruding himself on their notice.

Opposing, as he should, those propositions, he might be supposed to be bearing hard on the individual who spoke singly in support of them, and to whom so many hon. proprietors had already replied; but he could not help thinking that the hon. gentleman had made up in prolixity what he wanted in numbers. He believed that there had been no engine of misrepresentation, so frequently and so successfully used by the enemies of the Company, as the unfortunate word "monopoly;" they knew the word was unpopular, and attached unpopularity to every thing to which it was applied, and therefore they had had recourse to it. "We will," say they, "call the charter of the East-India Company a monopoly—and so we shall make the charter unpopular, and the Company unpopular, and every thing unpopular, except what is favourable to our own interests." This was all very ingenious, it possessed every merit which could belong to such a contrivance, except that little old-fashioned virtue, *truth*, and of this it did not contain one particle. And yet they were called on, in consequence of that accusation, to sacrifice the rights and subsistence of individuals, the strength and supply of the state, the labours of centuries which were past, and the hopes of ages that are to come. What were the

plain and simple facts, well known to this Court, and which ought to be known by the public, who appear to be ignorant of them? They were these: that for twenty years the monopoly had been given up, and shipping had been provided (even more than had been called for) to enable the private merchants to carry on a trade with territories conquered by the Company's arms, maintained at their expense, and preserved by their wisdom. (*Hear !*) It was for the private merchants they had been doing all this, who now accused them of being monopolists. (*Hear !*) If they were monopolists, they were so only in the *expense*,—and whatever avidity the private merchant might shew to participate in other things, he seemed to have no idea of interfering with the Company's monopoly in that. (*Hear !*)

He would not take up much of their time in proving the positive folly of drawing a comparison between the increase of trade, which occurred after the falling off in our intercourse with America, and the sort of increase expected from the proposed alteration.—Though it might be argued that the course of trade would change, and that a new and advantageous commerce might be opened, between

states whose language, manners, customs, and religion were analogous—yet this probability ceased when they went to a country with which they had nothing in common, nay, whose climate, habits, and propensities were totally different. Was it supposed that the private merchants, by sending out a supply of goods, could at once create a demand for them? Did they suppose that they could in an instant effect what the East-India Company, with long experience, immense capital, and magnificent establishments, had been unable to execute? Did they believe, that they had only to visit the Æthiopian, and bid him change his skin? (*Applause.*) But it was contended that the facilities to the private trader were not arranged in such a way as that he could make full use of them. It was contended that the East-India Company had been in the habit of arbitrarily altering and raising the price of freight to the private traders—he believed that those who used this argument had not looked into the acts of Parliament which had been passed on this subject since the last renewal of the charter. In truth, the thing never had been done, and could not be done by the Company; for it was expressly provided in the act of Parliament, that they should not raise the price of freight with-

out the opinion of the Board of Control; and even when the latter had given their consent, the Court of Directors were compelled to meet, from time to time, and report on the existence or non-existence of those circumstances in consequence of which the rise was permitted. Surely no person would say, after a perusal of the papers laid before the Court, that there was any collusion between the Directors and the Board of Control. (*Applause.*) But when their opponents were driven from the ground of fact, they say, "let us take up the question on a broad and extensive basis!—Here are persons making a large profit by commercial intercourse with an immense country, from which we are almost excluded—they are mere tenants of a farm,—their lease is almost out,—and we ought now to participate in the benefits so long enjoyed by them!" Allowing this to be the fact, what did it amount to? Let them be considered tenants of the farm, and what was the answer?—they had been a long time expending their money in the improvement of that farm,—they had laboured to cultivate it,—they have succeeded in rendering it fertile,—and now they wanted a renewal of their lease, that they might gather in the produce of their capital and their labour. It was admitted that

they had improved the land; and was it just or equitable, that when they expressed a wish to derive the advantage of their industry, Ministers should turn round and say, "No! it shall be given to others; others shall reap what you alone have taken the pains to sow!" (*Hear! hear!*)

The honorable Gentleman who moved the amendment, allowed that so far from there being any cause of complaint against the Government of the Company, it had been managed as well as it possibly could; even better, said that honorable Gentleman, in his warm panegyric, than the Government at home. Was it then to be imagined, that the private traders would be able to carry on that system *better*, which was at present supported as well as it was possible for any system to be? Or, were we not rather to fear, that if the trade were thrown open in the mode intended, the Indian empire would not be able to sustain itself against the ambitious schemes of speculators and adventurers.

The honorable Gentleman who spoke last observed, that the export trade no longer formed a part of the question, as it had already been given up. He could not agree in this sentiment, for the Court of Directors had not given up that ground, on which they originally relied. They

abandoned it, not positively and unconditionally, but with certain stipulations and conditions—"We will," said they, "give up this to you, if you agree to certain material points." Now, if this stipulation was not fulfilled, he maintained that they had a right to resume their original position, whenever they pleased. This justified him in the view he had already taken; but in the few further remarks which he should offer on it, he should confine himself to the propriety of restricting the trade to the port of London alone. Was it, then, a question between London and the outports merely? No, it was a question between the East India Company and the fair merchant, whomsoever and wheresoever, and the dealers in contraband traffic, throughout the country. This, however it might be disguised or evaded, was the true question. (*Hear !*) There was no person who had read the documents but would perceive that some extension must take place, though not so great as the advocates for a free trade might hope. But supposing the trade to be extended in the degree demanded, by whom would the benefit be enjoyed? Not by the East India Company; not by the fair trader; but by a gang of smugglers. (*Applause.*) The smugglers would virtually possess that very

monopoly, which, in the hands of the East-India Company, has created so much noise and clamour. If the propriety of continuing the trade to the Company were to be defended only on the facility of smuggling tea, which the proposed alteration must afford, that ground alone, he thought, would be sufficient to decide the question. An honorable Gentleman (whom but for his slight acquaintance with him he should be happy to call his friend) had plainly shewn, that all regulations for the prevention of an illicit traffic were futile and fallacious—and he alludes eloquently to the measures taken by our enemy on the Continent—"who," says he, "found that neither confiscation, burning, nor death, could subdue the exertions of the enterprising, when stimulated by the hope of gain." But, he might have stated a circumstance, which comes a little more near to their business and their bosoms: he might have stated that though the government of this country had tried every means in their power to prevent the exportation of bullion, at a profit of only *one half* per cent.; yet they had been utterly unable to keep the specie in the country. Now, if a profit of one half per cent. induced men to send our bullion to the Continent, what would be the effect, where the profit was

95 per cent. as it was on teas smuggled? It might be said that the private trader would not be permitted to go out to China; but it must be recollected that at Java, and other islands in the East-Indies, tea may very readily be procured; and though not so cheap, it is true, as at the fountain head, yet the greatness of the profit would amply repay the adventurer for the difference. It should also be recollected, that the Americans, who were not bound by any laws, and who had no qualms of conscience on the subject, would not scruple to supply the illicit dealer when they could make a certain profit by it. (*Hear! hear!*)

An hon. gentleman (Mr. Impey) had said, "we are now attacked in the citadel of our strength:" he liked the metaphor and he would pursue it farther. Suppose the governor of a town besieged, for a long time kept only one gate open, for his communication with the surrounding country; what would be thought of him, if he suddenly gave orders to unbar all the gates, North and South, East and West, and assigned as his excuse for so doing, that he meant to double his guards; thus creating a danger, for the pleasure of opposing it? He did not like this double-faced policy; he did not like to give away

absolute safety for the sake of trying more cumbersome expenses and heavier establishments, which, after all, could not obviate the mischief. It would be as feasible to cry down vice by proclamation, or to prohibit disease by act of parliament, as, by mere positive regulations, to hope for the prevention of illicit traffic. He must be more than a Hercules, who could bind the fleeting streams of that golden current. And, however small his own information might be upon the subject, of this he was convinced, that if the Directors, who were the most competent judges, believed that these demands would really be of service to the country at large, they, and the Court of Proprietors, would be the first to adopt the plan, by acceding to the wishes of the petitioners. For, he was sure, they had been always ready to settle, fairly and candidly, the claims of every person opposed to them by a concession of every thing short of their duty as British subjects. He wished he could see the same liberality on the part of their oppositors; but they appeared to be admirers of patriotism rather in others than in themselves. They did not seem to value that patriotism which was present, and by which, therefore, nothing was to be gained; but they adhere to

that which depends on the future, by which no loss could be sustained to themselves, and which might probably put something in their pockets. (*Hear! hear!*)

On the third point, the danger which was to be apprehended from the influx of adventurers to India, he should say little; for the papers before the Court had so decidedly and explicitly pointed out the mischief, as to leave no room for doubt. He was for preserving the rights and privileges of the East-India Company: but he was for defending them temperately as well as firmly: he was not willing to throw defiance in the teeth of His Majesty's Government. He only desired that they should stand proudly and manifestly in the right; and he thought it would be best to confine themselves to the immediate commercial question, without expatiating on any supposed designs of a political nature. Thus much, however, he could not but say, that if any farther innovation was intended, the present was a most inauspicious period for its introduction. When an operation was about to be performed on the natural body, what was the course of the skilful anatomist? Was it not, in the first place, to remove inflammation, and

to reduce the nerves to a state of repose and quiet? And what was the time selected for this perilous experiment on the body politic? When the public mind was inflamed: when we were pressed by enemies abroad, and appalled by distresses at home: when all was doubt, and difficulty, and danger, and irritation; but most particularly amongst those merchants who were now clamouring for a participation in the commerce of the East. He would not comment any further on their conduct; but, unless His Majesty's Ministers, or their advocates, should adduce stronger reasons than he had yet heard from them, he would maintain that these invasions, subversive of the Company's rights, would also be hurtful to the power of England, and detrimental to the safety, honour, and prosperity of the whole commercial world. The amendment had, of course, his most decided negative. (*Great applause.*)

Mr. *Plomer* said, he should have addressed them in the early part of the debate, had he not felt a consciousness of incapacity; but, on a subject of so much importance, even the smallest information might be serviceable, and, therefore, he hoped the Court would indulge him in making a few observations. The cause of the Company had for its basis, justice and policy, and in supporting that cause, he could not sufficiently admire

the candour and conciliatory disposition which had been displayed by the Court of Directors. If the question were to be decided by the good sense of the Empire at large, or by the weight of argument, he had no doubt what that decision would be. They had read the correspondence, and he felt that every point of reasoning advanced by the Court of Directors, had its foundation in truth and equity. If he understood rightly the nature of a Charter, it was an agreement between two parties, to do that which they could not perform alone. This applied not only to the East-India Company, but to the Bank of England, and other chartered bodies, where certain stipulations, founded in the wisdom as well as in the necessity of the case, were agreed to be performed by the respective parties. The East-India commerce was first attempted to be carried on by Individuals in this country; but though acting under the title of a body, they could not succeed, and that which is termed "a monopoly," but the propriety of which term he denied, was obliged to be conferred upon them. It would be found that our great commercial enemies, the French and Dutch, acted in the same manner. By them also, individual exertion was first employed in the India trade; but like us, they were compelled to alter the system, and to establish

Companies. What did the British East India Company stipulate to do? They stipulated that the trade should be carried on, as beneficially, as possible, for the state and for the community: and the government said, "so long as this stipulation is fulfilled, so long shall we renew your Charter." They all knew how far the Company had performed its agreement; and they should look to the state of its commerce. That which in its origin was a small brook, scarcely bubbling above the surface of the ground, was now a mighty river, fertilizing, ornamenting and increasing the strength of the Empire. And when they looked towards those who were Merchants, they would behold in them the sovereigns of India. In short, in all possible points of view, the just claims of the Company had been extended and enlarged from year to year. In process of time, the present excellent government of India was formed,—It had

"Grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength;"

and so connected was it with the interests of the people, that if they were to destroy it, they would also destroy the country. From Merchants they were obliged to become Governors; and those who were at first the framers of their Charter, were at length compelled to become sharers in the

venture. If, therefore, the system was the work of prudence and wisdom, it was not only needless but mischievous, at such a period as this, to alter it.

He should now advert to a point which had not been so much touched on as it deserved. In the addresses from Birmingham and other places, the petitioners declared, "that their object is not merely to take a share of the Indian trade, but that they intend to settle and colonize in the East;" and they stated, that "they can see no danger from the most extensive colonization in India." Every one knew the danger in former periods, when the facility of proceeding to that country was not so great as it was now. Every one knew, that at that time it was very difficult to exclude French agents; if, therefore, with all those precautions, of which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) had spoken so highly, it was found impossible to prevent French emissaries from entering those countries; how were they to be guarded against, when every precaution should be laid aside? All knew with what an evil eye the French had long looked on our Indian trade; all knew, that they considered it as one of the main props of the British Empire; and that to wrest it from us, they invaded Egypt, which they contemplated as the key of our eastern dominions.

No doubt it would be said, "every care will be taken to exclude improper characters,—you may for instance, have an exact description of every person who goes out to India." This was very true; but how were they to know, that he who was going out, under the designation of a seaman or an agent, might not be an enemy's emissary? As to the increase of their exports to the East, he was far from believing any such effect would be produced. All knew that a considerable proportion of tonnage was now appropriated to the use of the private-trader, (which was not taken up), and, even if more were wanted, it would be provided. But the fact was, from the customs and manners of the inhabitants of India, it was morally impossible, they should consume more than they at present did.

How far the fiscal regulations could be extended to the outports, to prevent smuggling, was a very serious question. The hon. gentleman who preceded him had stated, that a profit of *one-half* per cent. was sufficient to allure persons, (though with the rope about their neck), to export the bullion from the country; and, had they not a right to infer, that the profit on Tea, which was infinitely greater, would encourage a most extensive illicit traffic? But it seemed, the commissioners of excise and customs had given

their opinion, that all this contraband trade would be prevented ;—he should be glad to know how ? It would be as difficult to prevent smuggling, or to collect the duties on Tea, as they were at present collected, if the import trade was thrown open, as to remove all the Company's warehouses, from the City of London to Liverpool or Glasg^{ow}.

In speaking of the danger which this increased intercourse with India might occasion, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) exclaimed—"What ! are you afraid of a few straggling raggamuffins ?" He would not so designate the hon. gentleman's friends,—but, as they were so termed by their advocate and supporter, he was willing to admit the correctness of the term, as one of the few facts stated by the hon. gentleman—and own, that he *was* afraid, not of the raggamuffins, but of the mischief they might produce to the fair trader ; of the injury they might do to the just and honorable dealer. (*Laughter*) If the persons making these demands were really respectable, and possessed a great deal of information on the subject, he should have applauded ministers for attending to them ; but they were not told who they were, nor were they acquainted with the arguments made use of by them. Instead of that, His Majesty's ministers say,—“Do you concede all the points under dis-

cussion; and then we will give you the reasons which render them necessary." He should be sorry that they took up this question on any but national grounds,—he desired them not to argue it, as members of that Court, but as members of the British Empire. Much had been said on the subject of the trade between America and India, and the former country was spoken of as deriving great advantages from it. An account, however, which he had seen, within the last two days, disproved this assertion. He had been told, by gentlemen conversant with the subject, that the trade was by no means useful to the Americans. Indeed, one fact had come to his knowledge, which supported this statement. A person took in a cargo of Tea, &c. at China, with which he proceeded to America, from thence to Europe, and back to America again, without being able to dispose of it, the market for many of the commodities, (cassia buds, sago, and various others,) being extremely precarious. The person from whom he received this information, told him, that the only chance the Americans had of making the trade answer, was by combining two or three voyages—Thus they would proceed to the Cape of Good Hope, and a variety of other places, on their way to India. Now, if the American merchant found it necessary to take this circuitous route, to make a

trifling profit, how would it fare with our own merchants, who are debarred, by the navigation laws, from such complex voyages?

He thought the manliness and wisdom of the Court of Directors deserved every praise—and that Court was bound to support them.—This could be done most effectually, in his opinion, by coming to an express resolution, combining perspicuity with brevity.—To the resolutions which had been proposed, he had only one objection, that they went too much into detail—at the same time that he perfectly approved of the spirit in which they were drawn up. But he hoped, before the discussion was closed, that some shorter resolutions, equally to the point, would be submitted to the Court; if not, the present should have his assent.

Mr. Randle Jackson said, that he had waited anxiously in the hope of some gentleman, on the other side, being disposed to follow the hon. proprietor who opened the debate, in order that he might, to the best of his power, have met any objections which could be urged against the Resolutions. He had been rewarded for his patience, by the ability which had been displayed in the discussion. They were told that their commonwealth was in danger; and he believed it, from the talents which had been called forth;

for it was a fact supported by all history, that, in times of peril, great abilities, which lay dormant till that period, began to develope themselves; and, till the hour of danger, the State was not acquainted with the intellectual riches which it possessed.—The question, before the Court, arose from a letter which had been received from the Earl of Buckinghamshire; in that letter they had been most flatteringly considered—the opinion of the General Court being there called for. The noble Lord had treated the proprietors, as persons worthy of being consulted; as persons whose decision would and ought to have weight.—Against him the same complaint could not be made, which had been alleged against other Governments—he had not entered on this negotiation, as if there were but two parties, the Ministers and the Court of Directors. However they might differ from him on other points, they must agree that he had acted with great propriety on this. He had called upon them for their opinions, and he hoped they would be as respectfully and candidly conveyed to him, as they had been fairly and directly required from them.

They were there met to decide on a most *dreadful alternative*; for so it undoubtedly must be considered. It was demanded of them either to consent to the imports from India being

brought to the outports of this country—or else what?—(Government could not be charged with having concealed or blinked the question)—some other means must be found of governing India, without the intervention of the Company. They were called on to consent to this proposition, naked as it was:—they were called on to consent to it, in the abstract, with all its dangers about it. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) had indeed stepped in, and promised *indemnity*; but they must recollect, that “*he is not the administration.*”

He could only look to what was contained in the letter of the noble Lord, and he there found no such word as *indemnity*. The alternative was there explicitly stated,—“you must, by a certain day, agree to the naked, abstract proposition, that you will give up the import trade to the country, or India shall be governed by others.” This must prove to the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment, that they were brought to the point—the aye or the no,—there was no middle course. They must either concede that which was demanded, or manfully and firmly oppose it. He was therefore prepared to defend the Resolutions, in opposition to the sentiments delivered by the hon. gentleman; Resolutions, which, though they had not been expatiated

upon by the hon. mover, yet displayed the genius of the inborn mind, which shines through the modesty and diffidence with which they were proposed—and every person who attended to them, must acknowledge, that the man by whom they were penned, must be a gentleman of no ordinary information and ability.—(*Hear ! hear !*)

An hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) rose very soon after those resolutions were proposed, and, in a speech of considerable length, of which he remained an untired, though an unimproved auditor, he had advocated the cause of the outports.

Much of that speech consisted of detailed numerical statements, to which he thought a distinct reply should be given.—Allowing all due homage

to the transcendant talents which had preceded him, and which had completely succeeded in combating the general question, yet, he conceived,

that if they did not overturn the numerical details of the hon. gentleman, he would depart the Court with “vantage ground,” which he should be sorry

to permit.—How much more unpleasant then, was his task, than that of the hon. gentleman who

had already addressed the Court, on the same side of the question, in performing this duty, on which their salvation depended, and how much stronger was his claim to their indulgence.

An hon. gentleman (Mr. Harris) had said,

that the speech of the hon. proprietor (Mr. Hume) was rather calculated for a meeting of Liverpool or Bristol merchants, than for the medium of the East-India House. He did not concur in this opinion—he did not desire to take any advantage of his situation, but to argue the question fairly and broadly. He was glad that it was unnecessary for him to make any declaration of his own feelings—all that affection could inspire—all that loyalty could utter—of veneration and respect for the East-India Company—had been already expressed, much better than he could have done it, by those who had gone before him. He felt himself *particularly* solicitous in his endeavour to answer the objections of the hon. gentleman—whether they were the objections of the Earl of Buckinghamshire he did not know; but he was sure, if the noble Lord had displayed as much judgement in his negotiation with the Directors, as he had evinced taste and discernment in the selection of his advocate—(if his advocate was indeed of his selection)—it would perhaps have been better for the interests of the Company. (*Hear ! hear !*)

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) said, he disapproved of the Resolutions, as being matters of opinion, and not founded and bottomed on facts—and he brought forward a vast body of state-

ments and details in opposition to them. He could not but admire the art with which he commenced his speech, by defending Lord Buckinghamshire from the imputation of arrogance, which had been thrown out on a former day ; thus ingeniously winning over to his side, at the very outset, all those, who, from public or private motives, in a court like that, were likely to be attached to the present administration,—by standing forth as the avowed defender of their characters from terms of disrespect.

The letter of the noble Earl he must consider as the joint work of him and his colleagues ; but as, in the House of Commons, all attacks were directed against the Minister, though they in fact bore upon the whole Government ; so, in this Court, much would be pointed at the noble Lord, so often alluded to, as the President of the Board of Control, which more properly applied to the entire body of the Ministry. But in speaking of his Lordship, they must not forget that he was for a long time their faithful servant.—He doubted not that he still felt great affection for the Company ; but, in the discharge of his public duty, had laid aside all private feelings, from the most conscientious motives. But they were bound to meet, and openly vanquish his objections and his measures ; for, if they could not do it openly,

their case was not a strong one. With one exception, therefore, he considered the letter of Lord Buckinghamshire, as that of the administration; he said, with one exception, for he thought it was impossible that Lord Melville could concur in such an arrangement, after the sentiments which he had already expressed. He could scarcely believe that he would consent to remain a member of a cabinet, which could support measures so completely different from those which he recommended. He did not know that youthful Peer, but if he had that honor, he would beseech him to pursue the principles of his father, and to prefer, before all other advantages, in public or in private, an undeviating consistency of character.—(*Hear! Hear!*) If he had the honor of being acquainted with the son, as he had known and admired the father, he would say, “instead of abandoning those measures which you have approved, act on the principle of those great men, who have sacrificed every hope of power or aggrandisement, to consistency.” He would remind him of those great living characters, the Wellesleys and the Canings, whose names did not sound less harmoniously in the ears of Englishmen, because they left a cabinet in which they could no longer act

consistently with their known opinions.—(*Hear! Hear!*)

The resolutions, he admitted, were those of opinion; but they were less the opinions of the hon. mover, than of those celebrated statesmen, whose sentiments were embodied in them; and he must observe, that, had he drawn them up, he would not have said, that such and such were the sentiments of those statesmen, but he would have quoted their own words; that the public, who revered them, should recognize the language of those whose sentiments had always been received with the utmost deference and attention. The Court must be aware of this fact, that the late Lord Melville avowed, in terms as direct as possible, these two propositions:—first, that the Government was inseparable from the trade of India; and next, that the trade could be advantageously carried on, only through the medium of a well regulated monopoly.—These sentiments were supported throughout a long administration; they were practically enforced by Mr. Pitt and other eminent statesmen; and even adopted by Lord Melville, one of the present administration. Nor should he omit to notice the opinions of the Earl of Buckinghamshire himself, respecting all the dangers and all the evils which must accrue to the revenue, if proper

guards and precautions were not adopted. Thus hinting at the necessity of preventing that, the possibility of which he thus unquestionably admitted. In support of his opinions, and in opposition to the statement of the hon. gentleman, he thought he could not do better than by introducing, in the course of his speech, the sentiments of those great characters, whose names he had already mentioned. The hon. gentleman had not contented himself with the first proof of his ingenuity, in drawing over to his side all the friends of administration, but had endeavoured to insure still further success, by narrowing the real state of the question. He said, "it is a mere question, whether the outports shall or shall not be admitted to a participation in the import trade." It was his duty, as an ingenious sophist, thus to define it—but if that Court thought the safety of India depended on the result of the present contest, fortunately, they were not bound to admit his definitions.

Mr. Jackson contended it was a great political question, involving the safety of the empire, and that they were bound so to consider it.—That the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) thinks there is no danger, he must suppose, as he took it for granted, that if he believed the intended arrangement was likely to affect the Government of India and of

this country, he would not have taken that opportunity to pronounce such a panegyric on the present Indian system, which this measure, in their opinions at least, must destroy and subvert. He would not, if his feelings were otherwise, have added to the enormity, or rather to the celebrity of the murder, by so much eulogium; for it had very rarely happened, that any government had received such unbounded praise; though he believed the hon. gent. in bestowing it by no means guilty of exaggeration.—(*Hear!*) Nay, the hon. gent. had even hoped, so much did he seem to approve of the Indian Government, that “no radical change may take place in it;” but, while he made this declaration, it could be plainly proved that he himself had provided for a change in his own amendment; and it would be easy to shew the sort of indemnity to which the Company would be entitled, when the government of India was no more. The hon. gent., instead of joining the Court to *prevent* any “radical change,” had proposed an amendment, in which an *indemnity* was recommended, when their political annihilation should have taken place.—He said, that, “in the beginning of the negotiation, we ought to have stated to Ministers the necessity of indemnity;” but was it not to be supposed, that such a subject would be introduced more properly by

those who suggested the alteration, than by them?

Mr. Randle Jackson continued, by saying, that he should state the reason why Lord Buckinghamshire did not notice that point; it was, simply, because there was no necessity for it:—it was a question of strict moral right; and that Minister had not existed for ages, who could propound a measure, utterly subversive of the Company, without, at the same time, recurring to indemnification. He professed his belief, that, if even *Jonathan Wild* and *his gang* were at the head of Government, they would not dare to make such a proposition, without accompanying it with the offer of a just and adequate compensation. (*Hear!*) Could any merchant of Liverpool, or Glasgow, expect to derive the advantages of the Company's fortresses, warehouses, &c?—could he expect to be protected by their armies, and to make use of their organized establishments, without affording a full indemnity? It would be a monstrous proposition; and therefore he should think the point required no notice. It was like the immutable principle of right and wrong; the *affirmative* was not demanded, because there existed no mind so base and so degraded as to imagine the *negative*. One of the hon. Gentleman's first propositions related to the negotiation of 1793. “The

Proprietors," he said, "were then called on for their opinion; they were requested by the Government of the country to say *yes* or *no* in that Court." This was very true; but the hon. Gentleman admitted, notwithstanding the celerity with which the business was commenced, that the proceedings were afterwards delayed long enough to give the merchants of Liverpool, Glasgow, &c. an opportunity of meeting, and petitioning the legislature. "On that occasion, Lord Melville," said the hon. Gentleman, "was induced, by the force of these representations, to open the trade to a certain extent. He felt the necessity of transmitting fortunes made in India to this country, and the proper mode of effecting that object was by opening the private trade. His Lordship observed, that unless the Company consented to this modification, their Charter could not be renewed." But what support did the hon. Gentleman derive from this statement? None whatever. Indeed, it operated against his argument. From this very circumstance, it was apparent, that one of the greatest India statesmen this country ever saw, possessed of great information and experience, was impressed with a conviction, that the trade ought to be thrown open on those conditions which the Earl of Buckinghamshire was about to destroy. The whole extent to which

Lord Melville's principle went was this—that the opening of the trade should be under the cognizance of the East India Company; that they should remain in dominion over the persons who might chuse to embark in it; and who should send their goods in the Company's vessels, to the amount of three thousand tons, or more, as stated by a Gentleman below him. Lord Melville opened the trade with one hand, declaring, at the same time, that though he extended it, the system on which it was founded was to remain, as far as his influence could make it, a well regulated monopoly; and he gave his reasons both for the one and the other. The prosperity which India had enjoyed (not to be inferred from merchants' accounts, which were not always the true criterion of national greatness), the excellence of its Government, and the general welfare and strength which the empire had derived under it; these considerations influenced Lord Melville.

But when he agreed to extend the trade, he did not, for one moment, check or impair the principle on which the Company's system was built. The great statesmen of that day found the means of meeting all the expectations of the country, without having recourse to that which was now sought to be done, and which went to subvert that very Constitution which Lord Melville

pledged himself to support. He was very sorry that all the patronage which administration, as had been justly stated, must possess, to enable them to carry on the affairs of the state, was not applied to the improvement of the Company, instead of being directed against them. That there was room for amendment, the Directors themselves allowed; and, if the Administration exerted their influence and abilities to ameliorate the system, instead of knocking it down, they would have done infinite good to the country. Had they, instead of dealing in those sarcastic remarks, which characterized the last letter, sent for the grave and reverend persons who constituted their Executive body; had they addressed them thus—"The outline is all that we can know, let us unite our various talents, and see what can be done to amend and improve the system"—such language would have been honorable to both parties, and the result of their combined wisdom would have been useful to the empire. It was unfortunate that they had not done this, instead of driving them to an awful alternative.—By taking a different course, they had lost an opportunity of conferring the greatest benefits on the public; benefits which would have made their names politically immortal.—(*Hear !*) Instead of this prudent and conciliating mode, they

had grappled with the question, and he anticipated that they would sink in the struggle; for it could not be forgotten, that the people of Great Britain *politically destroyed* one of the greatest men amongst them (Mr. Fox), for attempting the *one-hundredth* part of that which was now proposed. Mr. Pitt did not dare to introduce such a measure; and Lord Melville utterly disclaimed it. He was sure the people of England would not allow those of *ignobler natures* to bear away that spoil, for the endeavouring to carry off which they destroyed the lion. (*Hear! hear!*)

If he understood the hon. Gentleman's proposition rightly, it was this—"You do not," says he to the Company, "embrace all the trade of India; and in that proportion in which you are *minor*, you act injuriously to the country, by permitting foreigners to usurp that which is the right of native subjects; and I will shew, from the increase within a certain period, how much may be done under a different management, and how much was done by the partial extension granted by the Marquis Wellesley." The hon. Gentleman stated, that in 1793, the private trade amounted to £181,700, and in 1798 to £800,000. "Here," says he, "is an increase; although it had been said, prior to that time, that the trade had been carried on to the utmost of its capacity;

in five years the importations of the private trader have mounted from £181,000 to £800,000, and in the year 1810 it rose to near three millions."

He was almost disposed, when he allowed the candour of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hume), to question his cunning; for he drew a most extraordinary inference from these facts, as he allowed them to be. He was lost in admiration at the extraordinary increase; he gave way to the exulting feelings of an Englishman; he clasped his hands, and exclaimed, "Look here! in seven years the private trade has had a rise of from £181,000 to near three millions of money." He partook of the hon. Gentleman's joy—every Englishman must feel happy in the flourishing state of our commerce; but he would ask him, under whose auspices was this change affected? Was it not under the very system which he deprecated? Was it not under the superintendence of those Directors and Proprietors, whom it was now intended to supersede? If the hon. Gentleman had said, "Did not A. go to Bombay, B. to Madras, and C. elsewhere? and mark what profits they have produced," there might be something in it; but the argument, as it now stood, plainly showed to what an astonishing height his very trade had been carried by those whom he now

wished to set aside. The hon. Gentleman was correct in his statement, but wrong in his conclusion ; for, in the latter instance, he had adduced an unanswerable argument in favor of the policy and government of the East-India Company, as it now existed.

The hon. gentleman had called the attention of the Court to the circumstance of the licenses granted to private shipping by the Marquis of Wellesley, in consequence of the complaints made by the merchants in India, by which measure property to the amount of £900,000 was brought home ; but, when he stated this fact, he ought to have recollected the particular circumstances under which it took place. He should have remembered that it was done when the funds of the Company were applied to one of the greatest of political purposes, that of counteracting the machinations of a power which meditated the overthrow of the whole civilized world. He should blush for that government, which could reproach them with the defection of their funds, when they recollected for what purposes, and for whom, they were brought into that situation ! Were not their finances, at that time, applied to purposes which brought peace to India and glory to England, under the auspices of one of the greatest men of modern times—and he would name him fearlessly

—the Marquis Wellesley? The events which marked the return of that Noble Marquis to this country could not be forgotten—they must be indelibly fixed on the minds of all who heard him. At that period, he thought it his duty to make himself acquainted, as much as possible, with past events; and, in the very storm and tempest of opposition, to unveil the truth.—But those times were passed; India was now in a state of peaceful tranquillity—no hostile army remaining to disturb her repose. At the very moment he spoke she was becoming powerful and productive; and might justly be termed “the right-hand and arm of the country.” When they beheld her prosperity and happiness, it was impossible not to look back with gratitude and veneration to him who was one of the prime causes of her improved situation. Was it, therefore, for the Government, at this time, to say to them, “Because you gave up your investments to achieve these objects, which have brought so much political advantage and so much glory to the country at large; because you have done this, your whole system shall be destroyed;—because you have expended your funds, in encreasing your army, to effect great national purposes, and have been, therefore, obliged to apply to government for aid, this shall be turned into an engine against you, and

those acts shall be rewarded by your subversion." (*Hear! hear!*) "But," says the hon. gentleman, "His Majesty's government were of opinion, that you did not give all the facilities to the Private-Trade, under the stipulations of 1793, that you ought to have afforded, and that much more might be done, and they insisted that more should be done. You pleaded your Charter, but an improvement did take place, and a considerable share of commerce was given up."

Now, said Mr. Randle Jackson, though the facts might be, as the hon. gentleman stated them, still the inference was strong with the Company. Let the Court look to the circumstances. At the time when this extension took place, a new administration, of which he believed Lord Castlereagh and Viscount Sidmouth were members, had been formed; yet, with all the experience which had been afforded, from 1793 to 1804, these Ministers, from the beginning to the end of that negotiation, never even hinted at what the Earl of Buckinghamshire mentioned in his letter. (*Hear!*) The Directors resisted that extension of the Private-Trade, and he also resisted it, on the ground that it was premature. If the revocation of the Charter could have been of national benefit, then there might have been some plea for the proceeding of the Ministry of

that day.—For he held now, and always had held, and he recollected the same doctrine having been laid down by high authority, that however sacred a Charter was in its nature, it was granted for the public good, and when it ceased to be of national benefit, the party granting had a right to revoke it, on one condition; and that was, the indemnifying those who were likely to be injured by the revocation. If the party who granted the Charter were not able to afford that indemnity, it was not a *national question*; and, if it was not a national question, if it was not treated as such, there was an end to the *social compact*. But the difference between the measure proposed by the Earl of Buckinghamshire and the principles by which the Ministry of former days were actuated, was complete and radical. The opinion of Lord Melville was distinctly stated in his letter to the Chairman of March the 21st 1803, and was as follows: “We are both (his Lordship and the Directors) strenuously maintaining, that the preservation of the monopoly of the East-India Company is essentially requisite for the security of every important interest connected with our Indian empire; and so deeply am I impressed with the truth of this proposition, that I am prepared explicitly to declare, that although the first formation of an East-India